

Rubricating History in Late Medieval France¹

Rubrics: What's in a Name?

Most of the manuscripts produced in late medieval Paris, including the many that contain historical texts, have been provided with a more or less complex system of textual segmentation. The means used to articulate the divisions and subdivisions of texts in these manuscripts often include different types of initials, miniature paintings, rubrics, paraps (paragraph marks) and a number of other paratextual elements.² In this essay I will focus on one of these: the rubrics. Rubrics were a familiar feature of western manuscripts going back at least to late Antiquity, when they were used, amongst others, in law books and in copies of the Bible. The *Codex Sinaiticus*, a fourth-century manuscript and one of the earliest codices with the Greek translation of the Bible, has rubrics in some of its sections, where headings and numbers in red have been added by the scribe.³ Most of the text of the *Codex Sinaiticus*, however, did not receive rubrics, and the use of rubrics in general in the late antique and early medieval period seems quite rare. The changes to the medieval book that took place over the course of the long 12th century undoubtedly influenced this aspect of the book but we still need a better understanding of the precise dynamics, chronology and geography of the changes that seem to have led to a much more generalised presence of rubrics in books in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries.

Before considering rubrics specifically in the context of French late medieval historical manuscripts, however, it is necessary to ask the question what exactly is being referred to with the term 'rubric'. 'Rubric' is the vernacular equivalent of the Latin term 'rubrica', which in turn is derived from the adjective 'ruber', meaning 'red' or 'ruddy'. Both the vernacular and Latin forms 'rubric'/'rubrica' are polysemic and therefore potentially ambiguous. In classical Latin 'rubrica' refers to a range of different but related realities. First it can mean a natural material that is red, like earth, in particular when it can be used as a colouring agent. From this primary usage its meaning also extends to text copied in red, in particular text headings. Finally, the Latin term can also refer to the textual units defined by such headings, in particular in the legal context, where it refers to individual laws.⁴

The polysemy of the term 'rubric' continued to a certain extent in the medieval vernaculars. In Old and Middle French the original meaning of 'red' was certainly still remembered, especially in academic contexts where Latin sources were being referenced. But in most other usages the medieval French term 'rubrique' was used metonymically to refer to textual entities that were often or typically, but not necessarily, executed in red ink.⁵ These included the titles of entire works, chapter or section headings, summaries of arguments (in court cases), memoranda, passages of

¹ I am grateful for the financial support I received from the American Bibliographical Society and from the Bibliographical Society (Cambridge), which made possible several library visits that provided much of the research for this essay.

² Hasenohr, 'Les systèmes de repérage'.

³ A full facsimile is available on the project website <http://www.codexsinaiticus.org/en/>, accessed 25 July 2015. Rubrics can for example be seen on fol. 89r.

⁴ Lewis, Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, 1602.

⁵ *Tobler-Lommatzsch altfranzösisches Wörterbuch*, 8, s.v. *rebriche* and *rubriche*; *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, s. v. *rubrique*. Busby, *Codex and Context*, 222.

longer texts, and verses or refrains, the latter in particular when they were written out in red ink to set them apart from the rest of the text.

In modern scholarly usage the ambiguity in the semantics of the term 'rubric' in the different Western languages is still present. The *Vocabulaire codicologique*, for example, defines 'rubric' in two ways. First as any text copied in red ink ('mention écrite à l'encre rouge').⁶ Second, as the heading of a text, or of any of its constituent parts, executed differently from the rest of the text through the use of coloured ink, display script (different script type or different modulus), or by any other means ('intitulé d'un texte ou d'une de ses parties mis en valeur par l'emploi d'encre de couleur, ou de lettres d'un type ou d'un module spécial, ou par tout autre procédé'). The Spanish and Italian translations for this section of the *Vocabulaire codicologique* give the same two-fold definitions for the equivalent terms. Ian Doyle, who provided the English terminology of the *Vocabulaire codicologique*, however, has proposed to distinguish the two meanings by using two different terms, and to reserve the term 'rubric' specifically for any text copied in red, while the terms 'heading' or 'caption' should be used for the second meaning. This proposal has not been met with wide acceptance, and the recent *Oxford Companion to the Book*, for example, still defines both 'heading' and 'rubric' more or less as 'heading', therefore primarily corresponding to the *Vocabulaire codicologique*'s second meaning, although De Hamel seems to be following Doyle's advice by referring systematically to 'headings' rather than to 'rubrics'.⁷

Doyle's suggestion to distinguish different meanings by employing different terms is in principle to be welcomed, but his proposal does not, of course, solve the problem of ambiguity: a manuscript heading copied in red ink can, following his logic, correctly be referred to at the same time as a 'rubric', when simply considering its visual appearance, and as a 'heading', when considering its function within the economy of the text. Another — and quite different — proposal for a more restrictive use of the term 'rubric' has been formulated by Keith Busby in his work on thirteenth- and fourteenth-century illustrated manuscripts of French literary works, in particular the Arthurian romances. Busby has proposed to limit the use of the term 'rubric' to those textual units or labels copied in red and found in the vicinity of miniature paintings, while at the same time suggesting the term 'titulus' as an alternative term to be used for all other headings copied in red that do not appear near miniatures.⁸ He has also suggested that scholars create neologisms for headings that are not executed in red but in other colours, such as those executed in blue ('blubric'), a colour typically used in French manuscripts of that period.

Busby's terminological proposals are grounded in the study of a relatively small group of manuscripts that are typologically, chronologically, geographically and linguistically closely circumscribed, which greatly affects their general usefulness. They also ignore the Latin and medieval usages and meanings of both the terms 'rubric' and 'titulus'. The former, as we have already seen, could normally refer to a wide range of types of textual unit that formed part of the system of textual articulation, but was used predominantly for headings or captions, whether or not these were executed in red or in other coloured ink, and whether or not they appeared in the vicinity of illustrations. The Latin term 'titulus' originally referred to inscriptions or labels, including those that identified the subject matter of paintings or sculptures — and therefore may seem more

⁶ Muzerelle, ed., *Vocabulaire codicologique*, no. 333, s.v. *rubrique*.

⁷ de Hamel, C., *The British Library Guide to Manuscript Illumination*, 16–7.

⁸ Busby, 'Rubrics and the Reception of Romance'; Id., *Codex and Context*, 195, n. 83

appropriate to refer to paratextual descriptions of miniatures than the term 'rubric'.⁹ From this primary meaning its usage evolved to mean the title of a book, and the titles of individual sections of such written works, often in the form of the headings placed at the start of a codex. In medieval usage the plural form of the noun is found to refer to such tables as well as to headings that marked sections or entries in scholarly or encyclopaedic works that dealt with a collection of circumscribed topics; by extension the term also referred to these entries themselves. It was not normally used for chapter headings in narrative sequences such as the Arthurian verse or prose romances.

Busby's proposals may seem useful, in particular to those similarly working with thirteenth- and fourteenth-century illuminated French literary manuscripts,¹⁰ but they also create a number of new problems. Scholars who may want to adopt Busby's usage will have to decide when a heading is close enough to a miniature painting to warrant the use of the label 'rubric' if it is not immediately preceding or following the miniature; they will also need to consider whether the existence of a meaningful relation between 'rubric' and illustration, which Busby implies in the cases that he comments on, is a necessary condition for a heading to be called 'rubric'. The criterion of vicinity will further prove problematic when one starts to consider real-word examples. What to do, for example, with 'rubrics' in manuscripts in which the illustration was planned but not executed? What about 'Busbian rubrics' (in the vicinity of illustration) that were copied into a new context where there was no illustration, such as in a table of 'rubrics' or in a new manuscript copy that was not itself illustrated? Do these cases represent 'rubrics' that were demoted to the level of 'tituli'? And, finally, what to do with cases in which miniatures were later removed from manuscripts, or cases in which it is no longer possible to verify the presence of miniatures because pages have been removed from a manuscript? Busby himself has not been able to maintain his own strict distinction and at times gets tangled up in circular arguments.¹¹ While trying to bring more precision to the terminology relating to rubrics by effectively redefining the widely used term 'rubric', Busby has come up with a shorthand term for the manuscript features he is particularly interested in.¹² Unfortunately this new terminology is too circumscribed and does not provide distinctions that seem particularly useful for manuscript studies in general.

The ambiguity around scholarly terminological usage for the word 'rubric' is also reflected in the semantics of other related terms, such as the verb 'to rubricate' and the derived nouns 'rubricator' and 'rubrication'. In incunabula scholarship the term 'rubrication' refers to all parts of the secondary decoration executed in red ink, many of which are not strictly textual, such as individual initials, colour-stroked letters, underlined parts of text, folio numbers, line fillers and paraps, as well as to the process of applying this secondary decoration to individual copies of the printed book.¹³ 'Rubrication' in this context seldom involves the activity of writing or copying chapter headings, because in hand press books such headings were normally printed, and were mostly printed in black ink. For incunabulists 'rubricators' are therefore those who 'rubricated' hand press books, that is, those who were involved in the process of 'rubrication' of these books, i.e. the decoration with red ink.

⁹ Lewis, Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, 1875; Sharpe, *Titulus*, 5, 8, 30–1; Braet, 'L'instruction', 203–4.

¹⁰ Like the manuscripts containing Arthurian texts studied by Fabry-Tehranchi, *Texte et images*.

¹¹ Busby, *Codex and Context*, 205, 207, 214, 219, 225, 240, 329, n. 147.

¹² 'Rubric' is certainly shorter than 'heading copied in red ink accompanying a miniature painting'.

¹³ Smith, 'Patterns of Incomplete Rubrication'.

In manuscript studies, however, these terms are mostly used in ways that are linked to the understanding of 'rubric' primarily as heading, and much less with the decorating of text with features in red ink or paint. For most manuscript scholars 'rubricators' are therefore the scribes who wrote out the chapter headings, especially if these were executed in red and copied by a different scribe from the main text.¹⁴ The rubricators were not necessarily involved in the painting of red initials or other decorative elements, although some scholars seem to include the execution of red initials under the tasks of rubricators.¹⁵ In late medieval French manuscripts it is mostly the case that the execution of large coloured rubrics and the copying of text fragments in red ink was probably not carried out by the same person, as can be deduced from the fact that often different inks or paints were used for the red initials, on the one hand, and the rubrics and other text fragments written out in red, on the other. This can for example be observed in the second volume of the Froissart manuscript in Besançon (Besançon, BM, MS 865), where the ink of the rubrics is markedly different from the ink used for the red pen-flourishes on the initials.¹⁶

Having briefly surveyed the semantics of the term 'rubric' in medieval and modern (scholarly) usage, I will in the rest of this essay use the term 'rubric' in the sense in which it was normally used in the medieval context: that of short textual units that formed part of the system of textual articulation in the form of headings at the start (and sometimes end) of textual divisions, whether or not these textual units were executed in red ink, as long as they are visually distinguished from the rest of the text in the way they have been copied.

The Genealogy of the Late Medieval Rubric

In his reflection on the aesthetics of the gothic book Albert Derolez does not consider the presence of rubrics a feature typical of the late medieval period, although he comments on these rubrics' specific *mise en texte* by pointing out that in the 14th and 15th centuries headings were predominantly set apart from the rest of the text through the use of red ink, rather than through the use of different script types, as was the case in the earlier Carolingian and Romanesque periods.¹⁷ Discussions of late medieval manuscripts often implicitly assume that rubrics or headings copied in red are a standard feature of Western gothic manuscripts.¹⁸ Many well-known manuscripts from this period, including manuscripts containing French vernacular chronicles and other historical works, do indeed feature headings of this kind and therefore seem to bear out the assumption.

If we consider French vernacular historical texts from this later period, we can confirm that a high proportion of them are transmitted in manuscripts that contain full sets of rubrics, in particular if we

¹⁴ Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts*, 111; Clemens and Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies*, 269.

¹⁵ Stiennon, *Paléographie*, 340; Muzerelle, ed., *Vocabulaire codicologique*, no. 211, s.v. *Rubricateur*; Derolez, 'Observations', 7; Id. *The Palaeography*, 40; Géhin, ed., *Lire le manuscrit médiéval*, 113–14. The latter speaks of 'titulation et rubrication' but it is not clear whether these two terms refer to one activity only or to two separate ones.

¹⁶ High-resolution facsimiles of this manuscript can be consulted on the Online Froissart website (http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/onlinefroissart/thumbs.jsp?ts=ms865_low_res_images) and on the website of the Bibliothèque municipale itself (<http://memoirevive.besancon.fr/ark:/48565/a011323184972LmXB9n>).

¹⁷ Derolez, 'Observations', 7.

¹⁸ See above, notes 6–8.

take into account the number of surviving copies. We could think in particular of popular regional and national histories such as the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, works dealing with ancient (Greek and Roman) history such as the *Faits des Romains* and vernacular translations of works by Livy and Valerius Maximus, and compilations of universal history such as the *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, the so-called *Chronique de Baudouin d'Avesnes*, the so-called *Manuel d'histoire de Philippe de Valois* and the French *Miroir historial* translation by Jean de Vignay.¹⁹ Historical texts composed in the French vernacular at the 15th-century Burgundian ducal court, including the chronicles by Jean de Wavrin, Enguerran de Monstrelet and Olivier de La Marche, as well as those by the official court historians Georges Chastelain and Jean Molinet, all seem to have been provided by their authors with full sets of rubrics.

Many of the manuscripts containing these texts, in particular those of the longer works such as the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, are characterised by a large format, a double-column layout, and a hierarchical system of decorated and illuminated initials, rubrics and miniatures that articulate and organise the text.²⁰ These manuscripts often display at least one paraph or decorated initial on every page and at least one rubric on virtually every opening of the book. The regular occurrence of these paratextual features obviously signals to the reader that the text is structured, if only at a visual level. The frequent appearance of this particular style of *mise en texte* in 15th-century manuscripts not only means that it must have appealed to the patrons who commissioned particular texts and manuscripts but also that it must have been part of the more general expectations surrounding large books, in particular those containing historical narratives.

The ubiquity of rubrics in the 15th-century Burgundian manuscripts undoubtedly owes much to the style and appearance of manuscripts produced for the French royal court earlier in the 15th century and in the second half of the 14th century,²¹ but also to Parisian book production from that period more generally.²² The copies of the *Chronicles* by Jean Froissart produced in the Southern Low Countries in the last quarter of the 15th century for the Burgundian dukes (Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, 5187–5190) and members of their court, now kept in libraries in Paris, London, Los Angeles and Berlin, are a case in point.²³ Both in their general appearance and in their use of rubrics these codices imitate and further develop models that had been produced half a century earlier in Paris, in the second and third decades of the 15th century. Typical in this respect for the earlier Parisian style are the large page-wide frontispiece miniatures, that take up nearly half of the page and that are followed by an opening rubric at the start of the text. In the Burgundian manuscripts this type of opening page has evolved further: the opening rubric is usually omitted and in these manuscripts the opening miniature has become even larger, now covering more than half of the page. The execution of the rest of the rubrics, however, follows the earlier style more closely.

The general visual resemblance between the two groups of earlier and later 15th-century copies must at least partly be explained by the fact that the later Burgundian codices or their exemplars

¹⁹ For an overview of late medieval French vernacular history writing, see Morrison and Hedeman, eds., *Imagining the Past in France*.

²⁰ A catalogue of surviving manuscripts can be found in Hedeman, *The Royal Image*, p. 193–268.

²¹ Some useful comparative examples have been brought together in Avril, *Manuscript Painting at the Court of France*.

²² For an overview, focused mostly on luxury manuscripts, see Taburet-Delahaye, ed., *Paris 1400*.

²³ On these Burgundian copies of Froissart's *Chronicles*, see in general Le Guay, *Les Princes de Bourgogne lecteurs de Froissart*.

were directly copied from earlier Parisian manuscript copies. This is particularly true for the manuscripts of Books I and III of Froissart's *Chronicles*, where it is possible to demonstrate that there are unmistakable links between the later Burgundian copies and the earlier Parisian manuscripts.²⁴ This relationship does not only explain the actual wording or placement of the rubrics in the later manuscripts but also the very presence of rubrics in the first place, as it seems highly likely that Froissart, when he wrote his *Chronicles* at the end of the 14th century, did not compose a set of rubrics for inclusion into his historical narrative as a closer look at the manuscripts will show.

The most straightforward case is formed by the manuscript tradition of Book III of the *Chronicles*. Research has indicated that all the Burgundian copies containing this part of the text descend from a single Parisian manuscript dating from the second decade of the 15th century produced for the *libraire* Pierre de Liffol.²⁵ This helps to explain the close correspondence between the various paratextual features in this lost exemplar and the later Burgundian copies. The same can probably be said about the manuscripts containing Book I, although the situation here is more complex, as this part of Froissart's *Chronicles* survives in several different scribal redactions (see below). One popular redaction of the text that is found in a number of Burgundian manuscripts of Book I, in particular the copy from the ducal library and those owned by Gruuthuse and Anthony of Burgundy, is an abridgment of Book I drafted in Paris in the second decade of the 15th century.²⁶ The Burgundian copies containing this abridged text were probably based on an exemplar that was very similar to the earliest surviving manuscript witnesses of this abridged text (Toulouse, BM, 511 and Glasgow, UL, Hunter 42). The three Burgundian copies reproduce closely the set of rubrics and the cycle of miniatures found in the Toulouse and Glasgow manuscripts.

A second group of Burgundian manuscripts of Book I is linked to the manuscripts produced for the Parisian *libraire* Pierre de Liffol. These manuscripts contain a fuller version of the text of Book I, as well as an entirely different set of rubrics. One of the Burgundian manuscripts, a Flemish-produced copy of Book I that once belonged to King Edward IV (London, BL, Royal 14 D 2–3), seems to have been directly based on a Parisian copy that still survives today (London, BL, Add. MSS 38658–38659). The latter manuscript was owned by, and probably produced for the Flemish nobleman John III of Roubaix, lord of Herzele (d. 1449), a founding member of the order of the Golden Fleece. Two other contemporary Flemish-Burgundian copies (Paris, BnF, fr. 86; Bern, Burgerbibliothek, A11-A12), about whose early ownership nothing is known, contain the same set of rubrics and their production is probably also related, directly or indirectly, to Roubaix's manuscript. A further Flemish-Burgundian copy (Antwerp, Museum Plantin-Moretus, MS M 15.4) contains a peculiar combination of text and rubrics, as the two scribes who worked on this manuscript used different exemplars, one representing the text and rubrics found in Roubaix's copy, while the other used an exemplar representing the abridged redaction and its rubrics as found in the other family of Burgundian manuscripts.

²⁴ The Burgundian copies of Book II all contain the same set of rubrics, which was probably devised when the Burgundian copies were being produced. On the origins of the rubrics found in Book IV, see Varvaro, *La Tragédie de l'histoire*, p. 22–4, 28–32.

²⁵ The exemplar was Brussels, KB, II 88, or a contemporary manuscript almost identical to this one. See Croenen, 'La tradition manuscrite du Troisième Livre', 44–5, 59; Id., 'Stemmata', p. 400–2; and Id., 'Le Libraire Pierre de Liffol'.

²⁶ Croenen and Loomans, 'Scribes or Copy Editors?', note 18.

The very marked differences in these two textual families of rubrics for Book I of Froissart's *Chronicles* confirm that the rubrics were not originally part of the authorial text but were at some point added to it by the book people involved in the production of manuscript copies. There is also other evidence from the manuscript tradition that the author himself did not compose rubrics for his historical work. Several of the different authorial versions of Book I have been transmitted without any rubrics at all. The 'Amiens', 'Valenciennes' and 'C' versions, as well as the authorial abridgment all survive in single witnesses that contain no text headings.²⁷ The unique manuscript of the 'Rome' redaction, which dates to the early 15th century and must be more or less coterminous with the composition of this particular authorial version of the text, contains a handful of marginal headings, but these seem to have been added by a contemporary or slightly later reader in a hand clearly different from the main scribe.²⁸ They do not represent a full programme of rubrication.

The manuscript tradition of the main authorial version of Book I of the *Chronicles*, the so-called 'B' redaction, provides further evidence for the argument that the rubrics were not added to the text by Froissart himself. This redaction survives in three complete manuscripts, as well as and three partial or fragmentary copies.²⁹ Two of the three complete copies contain no rubrics at all.³⁰ The three partial copies of the 'B' redactions all have rubrics, but in two of them the rubrics were clearly added at a later stage. In the case of the late 14th-century Kortrijk manuscript, this must have happened in the 16th century, when a reader seems to have copied rubrics from a contemporary printed edition of the 'A' redaction into the margin of the manuscript. Another manuscript of the 'B' version of Book I, BnF fr. 5006, has a regular and entirely different set of marginal headings added in a different hand from the scribe. Nearly all of these have been transmitted into this manuscript's direct copy, BnF fr. 20357, where they appear as regular rubrics copied by the scribe at the start of chapters.³¹ These two manuscripts may give an idea of how collections of rubrics came about and were transmitted.

The earliest witnesses of Books II and III ('second redaction') also lack rubrics.³² The other surviving manuscripts of Book III all contain rubrics, but the pattern of variation between them shows that they go back to three entirely separate sets of rubrics, composed independently, probably by Parisian scribes in the first or second decade of the 15th century, and added to the manuscript tradition in the course of its transmission.³³ One set of rubrics, found in London, BL, Arundel 67 III, partially reappears in the fragment CUB Hh.3.16 (fol. VII). Another, found in BnF, fr. 6475, a manuscript written by the well-known Breton scribe Raoul Tainguy, was replicated in this volume's

²⁷ Amiens, BM, 486; Valenciennes, BM, 638; Chicago, Newberry Library, Case f.37; BnF, fr. 10144. None of these copies contain regular rubrics, but the Valenciennes and Paris manuscripts contain a final rubric, while the Chicago manuscript has a scribal colophon.

²⁸ BAV, Reg. Lat. 869. These additions have been partly and inaccurately transcribed in Diller, 'La dernière rédaction du Premier Livre', 94–5.

²⁹ The complete copies are BnF, 6477–9; Ibid., 20356–20357 and Ibid., n.a.f. 5013. The partial copies are Kortrijk, Stadsbibliotheek, Cod. 329 (beginning only); BnF, fr. 5006 (end only) and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek — Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Rhediger 2 (end only).

³⁰ BnF, 6477–9 and n.a.f. 5013.

³¹ BnF fr. 20357's companion volume, BnF fr. 20356, which contains the beginning of Book I, also has regular rubrics, different from those found in the Kortrijk manuscript. It is very likely that the rubrics in Fr. 20356 were similarly copied from the lost first volume of Fr. 5006, where the headings must have also been added in the margins.

³² Leiden, UB, VGGF 9 II (Book II); Chicago, Newberry Library, Case f. 37, vol. 2 (Book II); BnF, fr. 2650 (Book III).

³³ Croenen, 'La tradition manuscrite du Troisième Livre', 30–3, 36.

direct copy, BnF n.a.f. 9605.³⁴ A third, shorter set of rubrics can be found in the manuscripts produced by the Parisian *libraire* Pierre de Liffol,³⁵ as well as in the later manuscripts copied from one of these copies, including the Burgundian manuscripts mentioned before.

Froissart did probably not include rubrics either in his separate *Chronique de Flandres*, which survives in two copies, one complete (BnF, fr. 5004) and one which only contains the first half of the text (Cambrai, Bibliothèque municipale, 792). The partial copy contains no rubrics, except for an opening rubric, while the copy now in Paris has been fully rubricated. The style of these rubrics suggests they were composed in the mid-15th century.³⁶

The inevitable conclusion of all this must be that Froissart was not the author of the rubrics found in his text and that these were therefore later additions and insertions. This may at first seem surprising in view of the frequent occurrences of rubrics in later manuscript copies of his work, as well as in relation to many of the historical texts mentioned above whose authors apparently did compose rubrics for their texts. Froissart, however, was not the only history writer in this period who eschewed rubrics. There exists a whole range of historical texts in the French vernacular written in the 13th and 14th centuries which do not seem to have had authorial rubrics for their textual divisions. This is the case, for example, for both Geoffroi de Villehardouin, who wrote his *Conquête de Constantinople* in the early 13th century, and his immediate continuator, Henri de Valenciennes. Their contemporary, the Anonymous of Béthune, author of two important texts, the *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre* and a *Chronique des rois de France*, and whose works often appear together in manuscripts with Geoffroi's and Henri's, also did not include rubrics in his texts.³⁷ Another anonymous 13th-century chronicle from the north of France known as the *Récits d'un ménestrel de Reims* and written ca. 1260 probably also has no authorial rubrics. We can surmise this because the manuscripts representing the original version of this text, including the earliest witness, BL, Add. MS 11753, contain no rubrics, and because the chapter headings in the manuscripts of the second redaction belong to three unrelated textual families, indicating that these headings were drafted as part of the transmission process of the text itself.³⁸ Jean de Joinville's biography of King Louis IX, of which a single medieval manuscript witness has survived, contains no rubrics (BnF, fr. 13568), again indicating that its author did not draft chapter headings for this text. The anonymous *Chronique universelle de la Création à Philippe IV*, which probably also dates from the early 14th century, seems to lack authorial rubrics, although in a late 14th-century copy (Cambridge, UL, Mm.4.44) the years written at the start of each section were copied in red ink.³⁹ The

³⁴ Tesnière, 'Les manuscrits copiés par Raoul Tainguy'.

³⁵ Croenen, Rouse and Rouse, 'Pierre de Liffol'; Croenen, 'Le Libraire Pierre de Liffol'.

³⁶ Another manuscript now in Cambrai (Bibliothèque municipale 746), which is often mistakenly classed as a witness of the *Chronique de Flandres*, is in fact a partial copy of Book II and includes the set of rubrics associated with the Liffol textual family of Book II. It was probably copied after an early edition rather than another manuscript.

³⁷ BnF, fr. 2137 (13th century, no rubrics); Ibid., fr. 4972 (14th century, no rubrics); Ibid., fr. 12204 (14th century, no rubrics); Ibid., fr. 2410 (15th century, added marginal rubrics).

³⁸ De Wailly, *Récits*, p. 7 and 20.

³⁹ In the 15th-century manuscript copy, London, BL, MS Add. 21105, the years are copied in the same ink and by the same hand as the rest of the text. A 15th-century universal chronicle, the so-called *Chronique des Cordeliers* (BnF, fr. 23018), which may be textually related to the *Chronique universelle de la Création à Philippe IV*, has full headings in its first part covering the period until the birth of Jesus, but then simply uses the incarnation years as headings like the *Chronique universelle*.

late 14th-century *Chronique des quatre premiers Valois* also lacks rubrics in its unique manuscript (BnF, fr. 10468, fol. 113r–190v).⁴⁰

Verse chronicles, which were still being written when Froissart was active in the second half of the 14th century, did not normally include rubrics either.⁴¹ This is certainly the case for the verse chronicle written in Flanders about the Ghent war (1379–1385), of which only a fragment has survived (Gent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 920). The two surviving manuscripts of the *Vie du prince noir*, written after 1377 by Chandos Herald, a native from the city of Valenciennes, both have the same prose rubrics inserted in exactly the same place in the text, but it is clear from the clumsiness of these rubrics and how poorly they fit into their context, that they were textual additions, probably added by the Anglo-French scribes who produced these two manuscripts or their common textual ancestor (Oxford, Worcester College, 1; London, UL, 1).

Rubrics – a Parisian fashion?

The reason Froissart did not compose rubrics when writing his historical narratives cannot have been that rubrics *per se* were unknown to him. As an educated member of the clergy Froissart was undoubtedly familiar with rubricated manuscripts and with the way in which the paratextual elements functioned in such volumes. The manuscripts of his own vernacular poetry, of which a number were produced under his direct supervision, two of which even survive (BnF, fr. 830 and 831), include a paratextual system featuring rubrics and a general table at the start of the volumes.⁴² Very many other similar manuscripts with vernacular poetry that aim to organise and canonise a particular oeuvre or collection of texts contain such paratextual reading guides.⁴³

Paratextual systems in gothic manuscripts that visually make explicit the structure of the books in which they appear have been linked to a number of changes in reading practices, involving silent, partial and non-sequential reading and reading for specific information — modes of reading that were typical for the cathedral schools and universities, where readers needed to be able quickly to pinpoint the sections in their books where they could find the information they were after.⁴⁴ Texts like Froissart's *Chronicles*, however, were probably never studied in medieval academic contexts. It is nevertheless likely that the broad changes to reading practices that took place in the later Middle Ages and that were largely driven by the changes in scholarly reading practices, also affected to some extent lay readers, including those interested in vernacular histories.

In the prologue to his authorial abridgment of Book I of the *Chronicles*, for example, Froissart gives us an indication of the increased speed of the reception of the information when he tells us that he composed this abridged version because people 'take greater pleasure in hearing and being told in *fewer words*' [my emphasis] the historical events he had recounted more extensively in the full-

⁴⁰ This 15th-century manuscript contains an opening rubric.

⁴¹ See also Tyson, 'Authors, Patrons and Soldiers', 116.

⁴² For a discussion of the historical context in which these copies were produced and of further lost presentation copies, see Croenen, Figg and Taylor, 'Authorship, Patronage, and Literary Gifts' and Croenen, 'The reception of Froissart's writings'.

⁴³ See the seminal study on such collections by Cerquiglini-Toulet, *La Couleur de la mélancolie*.

⁴⁴ See for example Gumbert, '"Modern" layout'; Hamesse, 'Le modèle scolastique'; Rouse and Rouse, 'La naissance des index'; Saenger, 'Lire aux derniers siècles' and Id., 'Manières de lire médiévales'.

length version of Book I.⁴⁵ The 15th-century historian, Noël de Fribois, in his *Abrégé des croniques de France*, a compendium of French history, specifically invoked the lack of time required for wide and sustained reading on the part of the kings and princes.⁴⁶ Such comments give an indication of the intended audience's perceived need quickly to arrive at the sections that interested them, an attitude they would have had in common with academic readers. It is nevertheless significant that both authors' comments assume a primary reception of the texts that was in some respects quite different from academic reading, as it was not silent and visual, but aural: Froissart, in particular, clearly envisaged a situation in which his intended audience would listen to the text being read aloud ('oïr traitier et recorder') rather than consult it by privately reading a book. In this respect Froissart falls within a long tradition of vernacular French history writing for which public reading seems to have been, if not the only, at least the major intended mode of reception.⁴⁷

In contrast to narrative historical works such as Froissart's there exist other types of vernacular works of history for which the primary mode of reception was much less likely to be aural; or if in practice it was aural then it cannot have been completely sequential. These texts include long encyclopedic works dealing with world history that cover extensive historical periods and wide geographical ranges, in which the focus repeatedly switches between multiple narrative threads. Readers may have needed more paratextual guidance in the form of rubrics in order to navigate these texts. Such texts were often composed by learned authors used to rubrics, and translated from original Latin works that were themselves, for the same reasons, found in rubricated manuscripts. It is therefore not surprising that even the earliest world chronicles in the French vernacular contained rubrics and that many, if not all of these were authorial rubrics.⁴⁸

Such an explanation, however, cannot fully apply to those works of medieval French vernacular historical narrative, such as Froissart's *Chronicles*, that were stylistically closer to narrative vernacular literature. For these types of vernacular chronicles the intended reception was primarily – or at least conventionally – aural rather than visual, and sequential — rather than non-linear. This

⁴⁵ BnF, fr. 10144, p. 1–2: 'pluissieurs seigneurs et damez et gens d'aulture estat prenent grignour plaisanche a oïr traitier et recorder telles materes ou semblables sur briefz parlers que quant il sont sy prolongiet'.

⁴⁶ Noël de Fribois, *Abrégé des croniques de France*, p. 87: 'pour ce qu'il ne leur [i.e. kings and princes] est pas possible d'avoir devers eulx les histoires qui par divers historiens ont esté de ce faictes pour leur grandeur et prolixité, ne de les pouvoir veoir et bien entendre, obstans (...) les grans affaires en quoy ils sont souventesfoiz occupez pour le bien de la chose publique'.

⁴⁷ Froissart's historical work contains frequent references to aural reception in extradiegetic passages that allude to information that his intended audience has 'already heard' or 'will hear later'. For comments on similar passages found in the *Récits d'un ménestrel de Reims*, see De Wailly, ed., *Récits*, p. VI–VIII; and more general Bratu, '« Or vous dirai »' and Coleman, 'Reading the evidence'. For the situation at the French royal court see Tesnière, 'Les manuscrits de la Librairie de Charles V', 48–50, 55–8.

⁴⁸ The so-called *Chronique de Baudouin d'Avesnes*, the first universal chronicle in French dating from the 1270s or 1280s, seems to have had from the start a set of authorial rubrics, cf. Noirfalise, 'Family feuds', p. 95–6. The *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, which preceded this chronicle by half a century and was originally also conceived as a universal chronicle, also only seems to survive in manuscripts that have rubrics. These rubrics therefore are probably authorial; see the database of the Medieval Francophone Literary Cultures Outside France project, <http://mfic.cch.kcl.ac.uk/textual-traditions-and-segments/histoire/>. Later historical compilations that were partly based on these 13th-century works, including the 15th-century *Trésor des histoires* (BL, Augustus V) and Jean de Courcy's *La Bouquechardière* (Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève, fr. 70), also contain rubrics. BnF, fr. 10138, the sole surviving manuscript of another encyclopedic historical work, Jean de Noyal's *Miroir historial*, completed in 1388, does not contain rubrics although the scribe of the manuscript has left blank spaces for rubrics to be added. It is likely that authorial rubrics were available, but that this manuscript was left incomplete.

different mode of reception would have reduced the need for paratextual navigation markers that facilitated reading modes more associated with academic reading. If rubrics do not seem to have been essential in their initial reception, what are then the aspects that can help to explain the presence of rubrics in manuscripts that contain such texts?

A first general factor that must be considered is the books' place of origin. By the 13th century Paris had become the dominant centre of book production in the north of France,⁴⁹ and vernacular codices produced in Paris seem to have been much more likely to contain rubrics than those whose origins lay elsewhere. Anecdotal evidence for this can be gleaned from the selection of vernacular manuscripts presented in the *Album de manuscrits français du XIII^e siècle*. No. 24 in the *Album*, for example, is an historical manuscript that originated in the region between Loire and Dordogne that contains the Pseudo-Turpin chronicle (BnF, fr. 5714). This manuscript has no rubrics and rubrics were probably not part of the authorial version of this text. Another copy of the same text from the Île-de-France, also without rubrication, can be found under no. 26 (BnF, fr. 2464). No. 25 in the *Album*, however, is a third contemporary copy (BnF, fr. 1850), produced in Paris. This copy contains rubrics. Amongst the other prose manuscripts presented in the *Album* (nos. 27–52) rubrics are found in a range of examples where one would expect to find them because of their clear links to learned or clerical culture, including books that contain translations from Latin or that contain collections of texts such as saints' lives or sermons. The more literary manuscripts produced outside Paris (30–35), however, have no regular rubrics whereas those that were produced in Paris mostly do contain rubrics.

The explanation for these geographical differences must probably be sought in the fact that the book trade in Paris originally grew out of the demand for academic books amongst students and scholars. When from the early 13th century onwards the Parisian book industry also started regularly to supply copies of vernacular texts and luxury manuscripts to lay patrons, it must have brought to this activity some of the assumptions and working methods that had been developed in the production of scholarly books. Deviation from standard and accepted production methods could potentially slow down the production process and may have been seen as undesirable in the context of the highly commercialised Parisian book trade.

We can indeed see that many of the Parisian artisans who were involved in the production of copies of Froissart's *Chronicles*, were also active in the production of manuscripts containing other works in the vernacular that normally contained rubrics. This may have predisposed them to the idea of adding rubrics to Froissart's text as well. The Parisian *libraire* Pierre de Liffol, for example, who was probably responsible for at least ten illustrated copies of Book I of Froissart's *Chronicles* that contain his own particular set of rubrics (see table 1), can also be linked to the production of an illustrated and rubricated copy of the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, now in St Petersburg (National Library or Russia, Fr. F. v. IV, 1.1-3).⁵⁰ Another group of manuscripts of Froissart's *Chronicles* that includes Morgan Library M.804, Toulouse, BM 511 and Glasgow, Hunter 42 seems to have been the work of an anonymous Parisian *libraire* who can probably be identified with Scribe T, the scribe who copied

⁴⁹ Rouse and Rouse, *Illiterati et Uxorati*.

⁵⁰ On Liffol's rubrics, see Rouse and Rouse, 'Some Assembly Required'. The *Grandes Chroniques* manuscript in St Petersburg was copied by five scribes, three of which are also found in Liffol's Froissart manuscripts, and was illustrated by three illuminators who together were responsible for nearly all the miniatures found in the Froissart manuscripts connected to Pierre de Liffol.

the text in the first two manuscripts.⁵¹ The same scribe also produced copies of the historical compilation *Trésor des histoires* (BnF, n.a.fr. 14285), the *Grandes Chroniques de France* (Kynžvart 85-86) and at least two manuscripts containing French Bible translations (Morgan M.133 and Chantilly 28), all rubricated.⁵²

Book I	Books II and III
Private collection (formerly Clumber Park)	
Brussels, KBR, II 88 (fragments)	Brussels, KBR, II 88 (fragments)
Brussels, KBR, IV 251	
Besançon, BM, 864	Besançon, BM, 865
BL, Add. 38658–38659	
Paris, BnF, fr. 2649	
Lost codex (model for Austin, fr. 48; BnF, fr. 6471; and Chantilly, Musée Condé, 873–874)	
Paris, BnF, fr. 2663	Paris, BnF, fr. 2664 (Book II only)
	Rouen, BM, 1147 (Book II only)
Stonyhurst College, 1	Brussels, KB, II 2552 (Book II only)
The Hague, 72 A 25	

Table 1: copies of Froissart's *Chronicles* produced by scribes and artists associated with the *libraire* Pierre de Liffol.

Adding rubrics to the Parisian Froissart manuscripts, however, cannot simply have been the result of working habit and there must have been additional reasons. Drafting the wording of the rubrics, as both of these *libraires* must have done, procuring extra materials (more parchment to allow for the slightly increased length of the texts, and red ink for copying the rubrics) and carrying out the extra stage of rubrication in the production of the codices must have had resource implications for the *libraires'* commercial operations. Adding rubrics would therefore only have been carried out if there was a real or perceived advantage in providing this feature. The most likely explanation is that customers simply expected large or luxury manuscripts to have the usual paratextual features that segment and organise the text, including different types of initials, paraps and rubrics, even if in these books they played a less significant role in the reading process than in the case of academic books. The rubrics in these vernacular manuscripts were therefore probably predominantly esthetical rather than functional, and were part of a system of conspicuous consumption. In this context it is worth remembering that Chavannes-Mazel has argued that some rubricators of French historical manuscripts adapted the wording of the rubrics simply for the sake of achieving a particular visual layout.⁵³ It can furthermore be argued that paratextual features in many of the vernacular manuscripts were not necessarily very efficient guides to a reading of the text at all, indicating that

⁵¹ Croenen and Loomans, 'Scribes or Copy Editors?'

⁵² This scribe/*libraire* may also have been the author of the *Trésor des histoires*, in which case the fragments contained in BnF, n.a.fr. 14285 copied in his hand would represent an autograph manuscript. Scribe T also produced the rubricated copy of the *Roman de Mélusine*, BnF, fr. 12575. In their description of the latter manuscript Van Wijnsberghe and Verroken have incorrectly identified the scribe as Guillebert de Mets. Bousmanne and Delcourt, eds., *Miniatures flamandes*, p. 159.

⁵³ Chavannes-Mazel, 'Expanding Rubrics'.

their function was something different. In the Parisian copy of Froissart's Book I, Fr. 2663, for example, many pages contain paraph signs that do not indicate logical paragraphs but that actually appear in the middle of syntactic units, therefore hindering rather than improving the reading experience. Something similar can be seen in the rubrics found in the first part of Morgan M.804 where many of the text segments executed as rubrics copied in red ink just before large initials are actually the final words of the preceding chapters. In no meaningful way can these 'rubrics' have functioned as chapter headings by informing readers of the content of the next chapter, although visually they would have looked perfectly acceptable to the unsuspecting user of the book, as together with the illuminated initials that immediately follow them, they visually signal the start of a new chapter.⁵⁴

Adding a system of rubrics to historical vernacular texts not only made them conform to expectations about luxury vernacular manuscripts, it also had the particular advantage of making them look more like the *Grandes Chroniques de France*, the historical bestseller produced by the Parisian book trade from the 1390s onwards.⁵⁵ This semi-official account of French royal history was first completed as a royal commission at the abbey of St. Denis in 1274. It was a vernacular reworking of a Latin compilation whose original exemplar (BnF, lat. 5925) already contained a table of chapter headings, with chapter numbers that refer to the chapter numbers found in the text. The *Grandes Chroniques*'s 13th-century original presentation copy (Paris, Bibliothèque Ste.-Geneviève, 782) contains a translated version of this table, but in later copies the headings from the table were inserted into the text itself, as in the royal presentation copy of the so-called vulgate edition of 1380 (BnF, fr. 2813), the version of the text of which large numbers of copies were subsequently produced by the Parisian book trade.

Other features of the paratext that explicitly connect the Parisian copies of Book I of Froissart's *Chronicles* to the *Grandes Chroniques* can be found in the various ways in which they try to impose a higher-level structure onto the text by dividing it into 'books' or 'parts', often with miniatures marking the start of each of these larger divisions. Both features are also found in many manuscripts of the *Grandes Chroniques*, which often have a quadripartite opening miniature and normally divide the text into 'books' mostly corresponding to the reign of a single monarch. In nearly all of Pierre de Liffol's Froissart copies the text of Book I is divided into four parts, more or less coinciding with the start of the reign of the respective French kings, therefore mimicking the system of the *Grandes Chroniques*.⁵⁶

BL, Arundel 67, vol. I, is a contemporary manuscript of Book I that does not seem to have been produced for Pierre de Liffol. It does however contain most of his set of rubrics (from § 182 onwards) but lacks a higher-level division of the text. In the table of rubrics, however, red labels have been used

⁵⁴ Croenen and Loomans, 'Scribes or Copy Editors?'

⁵⁵ Hedeman, *The Royal Image*.

⁵⁶ In the Liffol manuscripts parts I (1326–1340) and II (1340–1349) more or less cover the reign of Philip VI of Valois (1328–1350). Part I ends after the siege of Tournai, an important episode in the early history of the Hundred Years war. Part III goes from the death of Philip VI to the death of his successor John II (1350–1364). Part IV, which ends in 1379, covers most of the reign of Charles V (1364–1380). In Luce's edition of the *Chroniques*, these parts correspond to § 0–137 (part I), § 138–319 (part II), § 320–512 (part III) and § 513–end (part IV); Luce, ed. *Chroniques de J. Froissart*. A division into four parts is already found in a slightly earlier Parisian copy, BnF, fr. 2642, which is textually related to Liffol's manuscripts and which may have been the original exemplar of his production. Another Parisian copy from the collection of Duke John of Berry (fr. 2641), which is a 'twin' manuscript of fr. 2642, has a division of the whole text into eight 'books'.

to impose a tripartite division based on the reigns of the three French kings, Philip VI, John II and Charles V. Something similar can be found in the manuscripts of the abridged version of Book I produced by Scribe T (Toulouse 511, Glasgow Hunter 42). No higher-level structure is found here in the text itself, but in the tables of these manuscripts a division into parts is indicated by rubricated labels placed between the entries. These labels indicate the beginning of the 'Scottish war' (§ 15), of the 'French war' (§ 56), of the 'war in Brittany' (§ 138), of the 'war in Gascony' (§ 204), the siege of Calais (§ 288), the end of the reign of Philip VI and the start of John II's reign (passage interpolated into the text after § 320), the *compagnies* of mercenary soldiers (§ 408), the beginning of the reign of Charles V (§ 510), and the beginning of 'war in Spain' (§ 546).

The opening rubrics, furthermore, provided *libraires* with the opportunity to market their products to potential clients.⁵⁷ The typical opening rubric of the *Chronicles* of Froissart as found in Pierre de Liffol's manuscripts together with the four-part frontispiece miniatures,⁵⁸ seems to have been designed to try to appeal to those interested in historical narrative, in part by visually referencing the opening pages of the *Grandes Chroniques*, where similar quadripartite miniatures can be found, as well as the wording of its opening rubric,⁵⁹ at the same time implying that Froissart's *Chronicles* were in some way superior, through the use of the term 'nouvelles' (which suggest that they are more up-to-date or focus more on relevant contemporary history) and through the inclusion of the names of several countries whose history will be covered rather than just France.

'Some assembly required'

In 2011 Richard and Mary Rouse published an interesting study of the practice of rubrication in the long 14th-century Parisian book trade based on some manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose* and Froissart's *Chronicles*, and one particular copy of the *Grandes Chroniques de France*.⁶⁰ They concluded that in this period Parisian *libraires* would normally want to provide rubrics to the manuscripts they produced, and that the *libraires* therefore needed to produce or procure lists of rubrics for those texts that did not come with a pre-existing set. The Rouses also showed that the Parisian working practices often involved the use of an exemplar of the rubrics that was separate (and therefore potentially different) from the exemplar of the main text, including the table of rubrics, with lists of rubrics often copied onto a parchment role, and that the rubrics could therefore have a different transmission history from the text in which they were eventually copied. My own investigations of the rubrics found in the Parisian manuscripts of Froissart's *Chronicles* tend to confirm many of the Rouses' conclusions but also partly modify and complement them.

The manuscripts containing the so-called 'A' redaction of Book I of Froissart's *Chronicles*, the particular version that was produced and disseminated by the Parisian book trade in the early 15th

⁵⁷ Busby, *Codex and Context*, I, p. 201.

⁵⁸ Mazzei, 'Reading a Frontispiece'

⁵⁹ The opening rubric found in St Petersburg, Fr. F. v. IV, 1.1, a copy of the *Grandes Chroniques de France* probably produced by Pierre de Liffol, simply states: 'Cy commence le prologue des croniques de France' (f. 3r).

⁶⁰ Rouse and Rouse, 'Some Assembly Required'.

century, form a large group, whose precise relationships are complex and not yet fully understood.⁶¹ Nevertheless, it is clear that two of the earliest manuscripts of this version, which date from c. 1400 and which are probably the textual ancestors of nearly all the other surviving copies of the 'A' redaction, do not contain an original full set of chapter headings. The first of these two early copies, BnF fr. 2655, has a single opening rubric written by the scribe of the codex. A later reader or user of the book has added occasional *notae* and comments in the margins. Several of these could have functioned as chapter headings; nevertheless none of them seem to have been transmitted to the manuscripts that were directly or indirectly copied from Fr. 2655, in particular Morgan M.804 and the abridged version of Book I whose earliest copies are Toulouse 511 and Glasgow Hunter 42, all of which contain full sets of headings.⁶² The absence of a relation between the marginal notes added in Fr. 2655 and the rubrics found in the manuscripts copied from this codex suggests that all of the direct copies were probably made before the marginal notes were entered in the base manuscript and that the persons who initially copied from that manuscript must have drafted their own rubrics rather than relying on what was present in their base exemplar.

The other early copy of the 'A' redaction of Book I, Brussels, KBR, II 2551, does not contain original rubrics either, apart from the opening rubric, which is different from the one found in Fr. 2655.⁶³ In the Brussels manuscript, however, a contemporary scribe has added rubrics in some parts of the manuscript (fol. 1r–4v, 6r–7r, 16r, 22r–38r, 52v–53r, 232r, 256r–263r and 287v–288r). Although the added rubrics are carefully executed in red ink in a type of bookhand similar to the main text, they must have been an afterthought as the main scribes had not left the necessary space for the proper execution of the rubrics. Whoever penned the rubrics therefore had to fit them into the blank space left at the end of the last line of the previous text sections as well as in the margins, which at times resulted in cramped writing. In some cases the rubrics were written so close to the edge of the page that when pages were trimmed during later rebinding some of the text was lost. Many, but not all, of the additional rubrics found in Brussels II 2551 were later copied into the two Parisian copies that were probably directly made from this exemplar, BnF, fr. 6474 and Leiden, UB, VGGF 9 I, but both of these books contain a full programme of rubrics covering the whole text of Book I, not just the small selection of text that had received rubrics in their exemplar. Again, the scribes, or the persons who planned these manuscripts, must therefore have composed additional rubrics.⁶⁴

The full sets of rubrics in these two later copies do not show signs of being directly textually related to each other outside the sections with rubrics that were copied directly from Brussels II 2551. Other Parisian copies that textually descended from Brussels II 2551 contain again different sets of rubrics,

⁶¹ The 'A' redaction as it has been transmitted in the manuscripts is probably a scribal version, which in all likelihood was substantially different from the (largely lost) authorial version of the text. This argument is secondary in the present essay; see, however, my comments on this issue in Livingston and DeVries, eds., *The Battle of Crécy*, p. 407–408.

⁶² Croenen and Loomans, 'Scribes or Copy Editors?', note 18.

⁶³ Brussels, II, 2551, f. 1r: 'Ci commencent les croniques de France et d'Angleterre commenees par discrete personne monsieur Jehan le Bel, chanoine de Saint Lambert du Liege, et continuees jusques a la bataille de Poitiers. Et après furent parfaites et compilees par venerable homme monsieur Jehan Froissart'; Fr. 2655, f. 1r: 'Cy commence le croniques [sic] de la guerre et l'occasion d'icelle qui fu longuement entre le roy de France Phelippe, et le roy Edouart d'Angleterre et moult de leurs successeurs.'

⁶⁴ On the rubrics in Fr. 6474, which was copied by Raoul Tainguy, see below. Tainguy also copied part of the Leiden manuscript (quires 1–19, 24–27, 31–39, 47 and 49–55), but for the latter manuscript he was part of a team that included five other scribes.

which implies that parallel sets of rubrics were being composed independently in the course of manuscript transmission. These families of rubrics include those found in the twin manuscripts BnF fr. 2641 and 2642, which are in turn textually linked to the slightly later manuscripts of Book I produced by Pierre de Liffol, whose text and rubrics are closest to Fr. 2642.

All this information confirms the Rouses' conclusion that rubrics were often carefully planned and composed before being copied into a newly produced manuscript by the rubricator. However, this was not always the case. There is evidence that in the Parisian commercial context it was sometimes the scribes themselves who composed the rubrics, and did so in a rather impromptu manner. Scribe T, for example, when rubricating Morgan M.804, seems to have made up the rubrics as he went along; often, rather than drafting proper chapter headings, he simply decided to copy the end of the chapters he found in Fr. 2655 in red, which visually, but not logically, introduced the beginning of the next text chapter.⁶⁵ Improvisation also seems to have been at the basis of the rubrics written by Raoul de Tainguy in the manuscript set containing the first three books of the *Chronicles* (Paris, fr. 6475–6475 and Brussels IV 1102), where rubrics often spill over from the text columns into the margin. This mismatch between the length of the actual rubric and the space initially left seems to have been the result of a situation in which the scribe had little sense of how much space was needed when he started copying a new chapter, presumably because the rubrics did not yet exist when he started copying the chapter text. Tainguy clearly had the flair of a copy-editor and he tended to interfere with the text of his exemplars, sometimes by rephrasing the expression, sometimes by adding or changing details of the content.⁶⁶ He was probably capable of producing rubrics on the spot, especially if he would have carried out the task of composing a chapter heading each time he completed reading and copying out a section of the text. The rubrics in this manuscript set cover relatively short sections, which means that it was comparatively easier to draft them.

Although Scribe T seems to have composed rubrics off the cuff in M.804, this was not always how he worked. In the abridged version of Book I of Froissart's *Chronicles*, of which Toulouse 511 probably contains an autograph copy, we can see the result of a complex and well-planned undertaking that included the abridgment of the text of Book I by between a quarter and a third, the division of the text into numbered chapters, and the addition of a set of rubrics, a table of rubrics, and a programme of illustration.⁶⁷ As the table seems to have constituted from the start an integral part of the whole undertaking, it was probably included in the exemplar of the text. Apart from the table there must also have been a separate and different exemplar for the rubrics in the text, possibly a list of rubrics copied onto a parchment role. This can be assumed from the slight mismatches between the wording of the rubrics in the text and in the table, which are found systematically across the manuscript tradition. Such discrepancies can already be seen at the beginning of the table, which starts with the general rubric, also found at the beginning of the text. This opening rubric is followed in the table by the rubric 'Le premier chapitre contient le prologue', but that entry does not correspond to an existing rubric in the text.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ See above and Croenen and Loomans, 'Scribes or Copy Editors?'

⁶⁶ Tesnière, 'Les manuscrits copiés par Raoul Tainguy'.

⁶⁷ See above and Croenen and Loomans, 'Scribes or Copy Editors?'

⁶⁸ Later Burgundian copies of the text, which descend from Scribe T's abridgment, even omit the opening rubric in the text, but still reproduce the corresponding opening rubric in the table and give the first entry as 'Cy endroit parle premierement le prologue de ces presentes croniques', Fr. 2643, f. [1]r.

The rubrics in the various copies of Book I linked to the *libraire* Pierre de Liffol provide further evidence that the exemplar of the textual rubrics was often physically separate from the exemplar of the main text to which they belonged. This can be deduced from a number of changes in the placement of particular rubrics, some of which are undoubtedly the results of accidents in the process of rubrication. An interesting case is provided by the rubric that was originally conceived for the chapter starting at the section that is numbered § 3 in the scholarly edition of Froissart's *Chronicles* published by S. Luce: 'Pour quelle achoison la guerre mut entre le roy de France et le roy d'Angleterre' (Brussels, KBR, MS IV 251, f. 3r). This rubric already existed when Pierre de Liffol starting producing his manuscripts as it appears in the earlier twin manuscripts Fr. 2641 and Fr. 2642.⁶⁹ Pierre de Liffol probably borrowed it from the latter codex. The rubric appears, with minor variations, in all the manuscripts that can be directly connected to Pierre de Liffol, but in the five manuscripts that were probably amongst his later products, it was moved forward to the start of the preceding chapter (§ 2), where it replaced the rubric that in the earlier copies appeared at that point.⁷⁰ This change in the placement of this rubric is easy enough to understand if we assume that the scribes had in front of them an exemplar of the text, containing some sort of indication of where rubrics had to appear, and then a separate list of rubrics that may not always have been keyed unambiguously to specific points in the main text. The reason for the change may have been deliberate – the suppression of the earlier rubric for § 2 and the merging of two sections of the text into one longer chapter –, or accidental – a copying error resulting from accidentally skipping a rubric, or the accidental loss of the relevant entry on the list of the rubrics, possibly when the exemplar itself was being duplicated.

An even stronger case of a rubrication error that was clearly caused by the rubricator's erroneous use of his base text is provided by the rubrics found in Fr. 2674, a slightly later copy of Book I that cannot be directly attributed to Pierre de Liffol but that seems to have been produced from his very own materials (base text and set of rubrics). Here the rubric for § 3 mentioned above that was moved to § 2 in several of the Liffol copies, ended up even earlier in the text, at the start of § 1 where it was clearly out of place, because somehow the preceding rubric – the first one after the opening rubric – was skipped or lost. Fr. 2674's scribe must have been oblivious of this error and carried on copying all the following rubrics in the wrong place, exacerbating the situation even further by omitting more rubrics along the way.

Several further examples of similar but less dramatic changes in the rubrics could be cited from the Liffol manuscripts. All of these can be explained if we assume that the rubricators had a list of headings from which they copied the rubrics into their text and that this set was separate from the exemplar that the scribes used for copying the main text. Apart from slightly different placements of particular headings, we can also notice that in some copies certain rubrics have been joined together with the ones immediately following them, to appear as single headings for chapters that were

⁶⁹ Brussels, KB, II 2551, f. 2r, also has an added rubric at this point in the text. It is damaged and therefore only partially legible but it is clearly different from the rubric in its two direct copies: 'Comment Phelippe de Valois, par l'accort des XII pers, fu couronné en roy de France, dont moult dam[maige] avindrent en [Engleterre et] en France.'

⁷⁰ The rubric appears in its original place in BL, Add. 38658–38659; Brussels IV 251; The Hague, 72 A 25 and in the manuscript formerly in the Clumber Park collection. It has been shifted to the next chapter in Besançon, BM, 864; BnF, fr. 2649 and fr. 2663; Stonyhurst College, 1; and in the lost copy from which Austin, fr. 48; BnF, fr. 6471; and Chantilly, Musée Condé 873–874 were copied.

therefore twice as long. The phenomenon is particularly evident when comparing the rubrics from one of the earliest copies, The Hague, 72 A 25, with those of what was probably one of the last copies of Liffol's production, Besançon 864. Up to § 13 the two manuscripts have the same rubrics (except for the changes to § 2 and § 3 as discussed above). The rubric for § 14, however, in Besançon 864 reads 'Comment le sire le Despensier le viel et le conte d'Arondel furent mis a mort en la ville de Brisco, et comment le roy d'Angleterre et le jeune Despensier furent pris'. It effectively combines into one rubric what appears as two separate rubrics in The Hague 72 A 25.⁷¹ This system of joining rubrics together is carried on so that the next twelve rubrics in Besançon 864 correspond to 25 rubrics in The Hague 72 A 25, covering the text until the end of § 137. Similar joining operations can be found in other Liffol copies, for example when comparing the rubrics in Fr. 2649 with those in Austin 48. Such changes probably reflect conscious editorial decisions on the part of the planner of the manuscripts, but they would only have been feasible – and relatively easy – if the rubrics were found on a separate list; if the rubrics were only entered on, and had to be copied from, the textual exemplar itself, any attempt at joining rubrics in this fashion would require drastic deletions and additions to the exemplar, thereby potentially affecting its legibility and usefulness.

Finally, the rubrics in the Pierre de Liffol copies of Froissart's Book I also provide some indirect evidence to suggest that rubrics were kept as sets copied not in bound quires, but on single sheets of parchment, possibly sewn together as rolls in order to keep them in order, as Richard and Mary Rouse have discussed on the basis of manuscripts of the *Roman de la Rose*. This can be deduced from the fact that whenever rubrics diverge that are present in closely related manuscripts, such as Besançon 864 and Stonyhurst 1, or BL, Add. 38658–38659 and Brussels IV 251, they do so for relatively short sequences, typically between five and twenty five entries. This number of rubrics would easily fit on a single leave of parchment. The relatively reduced and localised lack of agreement between two such related copies could therefore be understood as being caused by localised changes or by damage to individual leaves that made up the exemplar for the rubricator. A situation in which complete sets of rubrics were present in full quires of folded sheets would be much less likely to lead to such localised losses or changes.

Conclusion

In this essay I have tried to suggest that scholars who study late medieval text and manuscripts should re-assess several of the assumptions about what is typical for such manuscripts, in particular the expectation that a late medieval manuscript normally has a set of rubrics that is part of the system of articulating its content. I have pointed out that there may have been different reasons why authors of texts or producers of manuscripts decided to provide rubrics to their texts, or decided not to do so. In relation to late medieval French vernacular manuscripts, I have suggested that the expectations of Parisian book people and their clients from the 13th century seem to have been such that most volumes produced in the French capital had rubrics, either pre-existing rubrics drafted by the authors, or sets of headings devised by *libraires* for inclusion into their newly

⁷¹ F. 9r: 'Comment messire Hue le Despensier le vieil et le conte d'Arondel furent mys a mort en la ville de Brisco' ; f. 9v : 'Comment le roy d'Angleterre et messire Hue le Despensier le jeune furent pris et menéz devant la royne.'

produced books, and that this was probably different from expectations in other cities or regions of France

In relation to the working methods of the *libraires* and their scribes, I have shown that there was a range of ways in which rubrics could be drafted and copied. Despite the difficulties in executing a full rubrication, as can be appreciated from the mistakes that were often made, 15th-century *libraires* and their clients nevertheless seem to have been convinced that rubrication was a necessary part of the manuscript production process. Given that the paratext was probably far less important to guide the reading practices of lay readers as they did in academic contexts, lay readers presumably appreciated rubrics mostly for esthetical reasons.

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Abstract: Most of the manuscripts produced in late medieval Paris, including the many with historiographical texts, contain a more or less complex system of textual divisions articulated partly by rubrics. Some of these texts include a stable set of rubrics that reappears in most surviving copies, but the textual traditions of others show a wide variety in their paratextual systems. Starting from an analysis of the rubrics in two of the best known historical narratives in Middle French that have survived in large numbers – the *Grandes Chroniques de France* and the *Chroniques* of Jean Froissart – this essay considers the functions rubrics had for authors and readers of late medieval French manuscripts in general and of historical texts in particular. As well as trying to understand why rubrics became a standard part of textual production in France in the 14th and 15th centuries, it also looks at the particular practices of the manuscript production processes concerned with rubrication.